Signet

Queens College
Charlotte, N. C.

writers . . .

You scribbling lonely souls
living in an age where you don't belong

feeling tomorrow . . .
writing yesterday . . .
putting out today . . .

knowing it's no good unless pen and soul are one

subjecting it all . . .

laying out your inner being for public interpretation
torn
apart
by a
murderer unaware of his guilt

and in the end you are left . . .
lonely, bloody and misunderstood

they will understand you—
tomorrow

Polly Smith

faded tokens
laid aside
words unspoken
tears uncried
times remembered
memories veiled
days were numbered—
time prevailed.

Kathy Fesperman

As I watched you
I realized
that you mean
nothing more to me
than any of the others
within these same four walls—
As often as we
frequent the same place
I do not know you
and probably never will—
Those who play their parts out
to the fullest—
Those trying to show that they're
something they're
not—
and those that
don't live up to what
they could be—
And of course those of us
who tend to realize that we
are a bit more ordinary—

You pass by me
and you look
familiar
so I begin
to speak
from within
but
I soon realize
that you,
the stranger,
are only
my reflection
in
the
mirror.

Linda Jennings

The Little Girls

In the lazy, drunk-hazy dark
the little girls are out tonight.
They are under glass
with saucer eyes and dull scales
wanting light
where there is none.
When they dance
the lean hairless thighs
meet and separate
like gills on a dying fish
infertile and dry.
As they drink
alcohol becomes blood.
the firmness, tautness
purged
as the muscles slacken
and the lips sag.
They attempt to lure
a prize, a trophy
but
fish who venture too close
to the surface
become the meat
for hungry pelicans
or are left
on a splintering deck to stink
and dry.

The little girls are out tonight.

Melanie Snow

Parasite

this iron-rooted flower
growing off my heart,
chancing certain
death—
idly fingering the strings
that keep me alive.
my breath is short.
half of it goes to the iron-rooted
flower.
my heartbeat is rapid,
partly sustaining
those glistening steel petals.
i guess that is why my
blood is red.
The iron roots
rusted.

Joan Oviatt

Jeans

Velvety pile of wrinkled denim
  River mud
    blending
      with vanishing blue
Crushed weeds and
    wine
  On yesterday's jeans
Forgotten fragments you keep.

Empty shell of thoughtless fabric
  Crumpled cloth
    having
      no mind of your own
Your shape is
    mine
  Ridiculous mimic
Remembering what I would rather
          let go.

Nancy Dooly

The Fire

Sitting in our
make-believe
home,
Wallowing in our
borrowed
freedom,
Watching the warm
fire burn with
so many
colors,
Melts my face
in glows of
green and blue.
Crackles and Pops
like so much
Rice Krispies
Keeping out the
sixty-degree
cold.
Sort of.

You are the Duraflame love of my life.

Moira Quinn

Routine acts like ether upon the soul
Enclosing us,
And slowly tightening
Its grip upon our lives.
— It creates the illusion
of security.
People become afraid
to venture forth
from within its enshielding walls
And the very life
they are trying to shield
is slowly
— but surely —
Suffocated.

Julie Bartlett

The Kiss

Restrained but yet released
    my hands reach out tenderly to caress
    the beauty of your features.
My palms envelope the warm softness
                of your cheeks
          fingers stroking behind your ears
                as eyes slowly close
          to contain the completeness of this
                moment.
Your face firmly held in my hands you melt

                towards me

    arms sliding

        around my neck

    slender fingers

        combing through my hair

your warm body tightly pressed against my own
  as your chin upturns
                heart on fire

and

        our lips embrace.

Lee O'Hare

Marion Cook

Untitled Because of You

Sitting there
in an
overly
replicated
room
at
one
of those
"Family Places"—
sipping
Early Times
and
Coke—
smoking
cigarette
after
cigarette—
watching
the
T.V.
and
each
other—
we discovered
that
we've
lost
"that
Holiday
Feeling" . . .

Linda Jennings

Hurricane

when blues and greens don't work for me anymore
when they will not blend
or form the hues i picture in my mind
then i must use words to paint what i see

the wind is slowly building from the south
a huge black cloud brings stormy weather
over an otherwise uneventful day
the old woman sits in a rocking chair
creaking on the porch
and an orange kitten dares to bat at a ball of yarn
which has escaped from her lap
once again, August rain reminds her of the night,
not so very long ago,
when another storm sent her weeping
into the arms of that strong, gentle man
her husband stroked her hair
she cried all night long
and vowed to move away from the ocean
the raging sea that stole her child
her only son
on a small fishing boat
in a summer storm

M'Lou Greene

I saw those scars upon your wrists, my love
they sliced my bleeding heart
and my care for you came pulsing forth
in a flow that almost drained my soul of its life
and left my mind anemic.
I know your pain, my love
it belongs to me and
becomes my own.
When I held you to myself last night
I felt your heart throbbing
within my chest
and when you cried your tears
were mine
streaming moistness down my flinching face.
If I could only see you laugh, my love
I know my soul would leap in yours
and we could shed our worlds
behind us
discarded in heaps upon the ground.

Lee O'Hare

MEMORIES

I followed four stars to the Equinox where, turning, I faced the many tentacled sun, source of power that bathes the light years, its silent roar resounding into still Uranian valleys. I stood in the path of planets and watched such slow and steady spinning—a clock that tells no time. I journeyed to where the black of space meets the jewelled rings of Saturn, who so splendidly wears this evidence of its wedding vows with the Universe, whose richly swirling colors erupt singing to other distant listeners. Yet even newer quadrants beckoned.

I was content to remain ignorant of the length of this next part of my journey, for the distance that lay between myself and my goal, the Andromeda galaxy, was so great that it had discouraged even the hardiest of travelers. Gazing upon my destination, so far away as it was, it resembled a ghostly cloud drifting in black sky. I had traveled seven light years when I was fortunate to witness the swift flight of the messenger of the galaxies—a comet, not yet arrayed by the touch of willing sun, hurtled past carrying tidings of the birth of life and yet another star. I felt great exhiliration at being so close to what, from earth, seemed but a distant shower of sparks.

The remainder of the journey was to hold in store the bitterest of solitudes. Never were the disguises and truths of isolation to weigh so heavily on my mind. The voices of those dearest to me and those for whom I held the greatest hatred resounded and echoed about me, a strange song in this soundless vacuum. I longed for the touch of another, to feel the green of mountain grasses cradled beneath my feet. More than once did smiling faces ease my desperate eyes . . . only to vanish at my approach. The veritable Universe was unhinging before me: even childhood demons became harsh realities, and the last things I was to see, for these too real illusions were to overcome me. Exhausted, I fell unconscious.

I do not know the length of time I remained in such sweet oblivion. Upon awakening I felt the surge of restored energy, but the memory of the lonely vastness which still awaited me, fell upon me like an executioner's blade. Rested as I was, I realized my trek through it to be only temporary and so thought of nothing but arriving at my wondrous destination. I soon became aware of the source of my fear of this eternal void, for every soul is truly alone in the end and I was then, as no other before me, facing that strange reality. The seeking out of the company of others, marriage, clubs—all distraction from realization. Death, faced solitary by all, became less formidable to me and I rejoiced in the little significance it truly held.

* * *

Andromeda—spiral eyes that dance with a million fires, lighting up the heavens as though each star was a finely cut diamond through which passed the purest of light. If ever one was to behold the sight of God, surely then I was as close as one could be. Through my experiences on this voyage I had grown closer to God, though on earth I faced the idea of a supreme deity with great skepticism, thinking such a belief a panacea to ease the minds of the ignorant in times of trouble. I revelled in the thought that I, a man, was supreme and my own God and the course of my destiny lay in my hands. I was to laugh, and still do laugh, at that foolish ignorance. Out here,

removed from my little world, I beheld the vastness and the power, and then, inevitably, my infinite smallness, both in mind and body, and so began to pray that I might have even the smallest significance.

What had once been a celestial ornament now enveloped me. This wondrous galaxy, daughter of the Universe, was spinning her web of suns and planets around me with filaments of starlight that touched me to the depths of my soul. In watching the beauty that lay before me, I found the close proximity of these star systems one to another most intriguing; surely, I thought, out of these millions of burning suns there were some whose third planet supported life exactly like that on my own third planet from the sun, Somewhere, someone, an exact duplicate of me, might exist; someone identical even unto our last simultaneous thought. Logic would so indicate, for could not random factors that work to create difference, work to create the identical? A thousand earths like my own, each a reflection of the other, that mirrored from every corner of the Universe. The thought troubled me, for I had often taken refuge in my individuality as it afforded me meaning in this sea of perpetual motion. The fragile peace of mind I had previously found was gone, and the spectacle before me only added to my confusion. The answers to the mysteries of this Infinity seemed unattainable and I implored the stars for even the faintest ray of knowledge; but by now I was extremely tired and the need for sleep was pulling at my brain. Besieged by conflicting thoughts, I fell into the oblivious sleep I had known before.

* * *

Sleep was good but for one dream that broke the still. When I awoke, the nature of it remained fresh in my mind. A most peculiar dream, I thought, for unlike most dreams, which form themselves around some fragment of one's reality, this one had its source in nothing I had known or thought of: I was drawn into what appeared to be a hole or rip in the Universe, space so dense that the light of the stars now behind me, was being sucked in, to then dissolve in this awesome darkness. How long, or far, I was carried, I could not say; I only remember that after what seemed five eternities, there appeared at great distance and growing larger, three lights, whose combined light surely was as bright as all the suns of the Cosmos; yet I was able to stare into it without pain! Beacons, I thought, that signal the end of this Avernal ride. As I moved closer to the source, my fears dissipated, and a sense of well-being and warmth covered me. My recollection ends here, for either I awakened, or the dream simply ended. Feeling unusually rested, the origin of the dream became unimportant and I soon forgot it. My eyes were fixed on the sea of starless darkness that extended beyond Andromeda; the distant possibility that my thinking had avoided now exploded in my face with terrifying reality. I knew then that my journey led nowhere but into the cold and lifeless blackness that stretched out before me; a forbidding region where even the stars had dared not go. Yet, in spite of this, my unrelenting desire for deeper insight into the cosmic puzzle compelled me mercilessly onward. Inexplicably, I was certain my journey would end in there, and with the knowledge I so craved. Sadness and the need of God was great then. Seeing sweet Andromeda, now behind me, knowing that I would never again be crossing familiar quadrants was distressing. Earth, like all memories, would have its shape distorted with passing time. The idea of death was soothing to me, for the real possibility that I might drift aimlessly until the decay of age sapped the life energy from me, frightened me as nothing had before; yet never had the certainty of finding that which I sought been so absolute. Entwined in this hot and cold that is space, I set off into the dark.

That I was moving was the only navigational fact I could rely on, and soon, even that would lose its certainty. The longer I journeyed in to this abysmal darkness, the more disoriented I became. I was quickly losing all sense of direction, and my mind was spinning for lack of tangible evidence that I was still moving in a material world. My first reaction was one of panic, but I marshalled my thoughts knowing my best course of action lay in accepting this void as boundless and empty. The preservation of sanity became my prime concern, so I ignored the blackness around me, and my thoughts turned inward. I withdrew from the conscious world of the senses and met my inner self. I began to discover who I really was and saw that my being was multi-faceted, some parts of which are evil and cruel. It dismayed me to find these things a part of me, but in facing them, I realized they existed only where wisdom and intellect did not. Thusly I saw my whole being with great clarity and without fear.

I lost my sense of time, but in that place it was not important. I knew, though, that I must have gone a great distance. My need for food and drink had left me. I hungered only for the inner peace the end of my journey would bring.

* * *

I had seen it in the distance for some time, what I thought might be a light. As I drew nearer to it, I saw that I had been correct in my assumption. It was growing in size and brightness as I approached, it seemed its emanations would surely melt even the coldness that was this place. As I closed in on it, and saw that it was not one but indeed three lights, I was filled with such an ecstasy of spiritual revelation. I now realized the origin of my dream and why I knew so well that I had reached the end and the beginning. I now stood at the source, and the golden rays that spilled upon me in such radiant streams opened my mind to the Infinite. I perceived the crystal order of the Universe, and danced in rainbows of refraction for my thoughts were reeling in the presence of these harbingers of eternity. I heard speech without words, and this was said to me:

"We are Time, Universal Memory, and the Unity.
We are one and we are separate.
We are born of the Infinite—all that was, is and
shall ever be.
Time is that by which Life navigates the Infinite
Universal Memory is the teacher, and exists in all
things that move in the Infinite.
The Unity is the brotherhood of existence, the
parts that make the whole.
We are the whole, a child of the Infinite, as you are.
Look upon yourself as you are now, for you shall become
as one with all the was, is, and shall ever be. Spread
yourself upon the winds of Time, and receive the gentle
kiss of the Infinite . . . "

I am timeless. My thoughts are as seed drifting upon the cosmic winds, and from the Memory they will sprout. The Memory is universal, and someday, someone will record the saga of my journey.

Clif Camp

Mick my Mick my Jagger
shake your finger
nod your shaggy head
    at an audience waiting
    craving your voice
    your every move
Honky Tonk
Jumpin' Jack
can't always get what he wants
but you can
you can
make love to every girl
    every guy
    every sexless teenybopper
with a jerk of the hips
    left, right
    two steps forward
red scarf teasing the front row
    with every hit
    the midnight rambler makes
with every hit
you come closer
teasing
but we can't have you
we can't
but if we try
we'll get what we need

M'Lou Greene

Colleen

Thin lipped widow
a crimson hourglass shows
glistening cold and bitter in your eyes.
Your calculated passion
burns my breast
like ice.
I would touch you,
but you could not understand
the meaning of my loving arms.

How do you love
to grasp a man by his soul
to tear his bloody heart
and drag his life out drop by drop
while toasting the world with his blood?

Ted Duncan

To The Troubador

these troubled lines . . .

and I remember the hot white wine
slithered down my throat
as a part of you
crept into my ears, into my senses
filling a hollow corridor
with memory:
    A newborn leaf
    with the innermost rhythm
    of all green things
    opens to the sun
    with painstaking tenderness.
Always
I remember you.
the part of you
still alive
in me
howls with sudden loss
as the moon darkens.

Melanie Snow

simplicity . . .

the sound of dry leaves
rustling in the fall air

the silence of friends in thought

cooking on a fire . . .
sleeping beneath stars . . .
feeling dirty . . .
    feeling nature

putting man and his social aspirations
beneath the sweetness of man's psyche
when feeling nature

to entertain oneself
to be self-sufficient among natural life

to love a tree as you would love a man

simplicity . . .

Polly Smith

STURNAGE

Where are my damn cigarettes? Thank God, Bennett's not here yet. How many more people are they going to cram in here before the night's over?

"Hello, Sigrid . . .Yes, we had a wonderful vacation . . .Hope your mother is feeling better . . .Oh, I'm so sorry . . .No, of course she will . . ."

In the midst of this stimulating conversation, Sylvia Morgan strolls up in her fashionable array, wanting desperately to tell me about her latest liason, but not terribly anxious for Sigrid to learn of it. Sensing Sylvia's approach, Sigrid dashes away, dodging drinks in hands and cigarettes by sides. My God, she must bathe in Estee Lauder. Sylvia immediately mumbles something about her upcoming rendezvous with this certain special male speciman who has recently entered her life. Should I pretend to be thrilled, jealous or shocked? How does she want me to react? Uncertain, I choose an air of indifference which apparantly annoys her. Sylvia moves on, making her way through the sea of socialites.

I need another drink . . My, my, don't the Wamplers look effervescent this evening? Our gracious hosts float from friend to friend, pleased with their effortless extravaganza. Mrs. snuggles up to Mr. with a nauseating look of affection. Must they always be color coordinated?

By now, Bennett has made his dramatic entrance with his new friend close by his side. They head straight for the bar. No—I won't watch. I head in the opposite direction, bumping into Bennett's law partner.

"Is your husband here tonight?" My smile fails me: the smoke overcomes me. "You know, that Ben of yours has got to have the best backhand at the club. You know, I'd like to see him win that tournament next week. You know . . . . "

What can I say? Alright, Bennett does have a good backhand. So what? Jay rattles on, "you know, I always told Ben that he should spend more time on the courts . . ." Well, my dear, Ben's time is taken up these days with other sports. My God—how that almost slipped out! I wonder if Jay knows?

"You know, Phyllis, you're low on Scotch. Let me get you another drink." He grabs my glass and I want to grab his throat. What a boring jerk! Surely he must know about Bennett.

"Phyllis, darling, I'm dying for you meet my college roomate, Carole Brandon. Carole, this is my dear friend, Phyllis—Mrs. Bennett Randolph." I mumble the usual introductory spiel. My God, this woman is made up like some sort of clown. Just look at those eyelids! My eyes search the crowded room for Bennett, finally spotting him surrounded by plants and people. My mind flips back a few painful pages to Thursday night. Yes, Bennett, I will try to understand . . .No, Bennett, I do not want a divorce . . .Yes, Bennett, I do still care about you . . .

Meanwhile, Margaret babbles on about her darling college roomate who just happens to be standing between us. Oh, what beautiful days they shared together. What wonderful trips they've taken together. And what an exquisite diamond she's now wearing on her left hand. I admire it. "It's lovely, Carole." I utter this with little enthusiasm and even less interest. But Margaret's gushing never ceases.

"Phyllis, darling, you and Bennett must join us for dinner sometime this week while Carole is in town. what a marvelous chance for us to catch up on everything. And maybe even some bridge, darling?" I shouldn't be rude, but she is absolutely revolting.

It looks like Jay won't be back with my drink. He probably has met another distraction along the way. Just as well. I begin to wander aimlessly through the crowded room. Catching a glimpse of a recently-purchased Monet reproduction, *Houses of Parliament*, my mind flips back many pages into the memory of our London honeymoon. Oh, God—I can't bear this awful joke. Such a beautiful honeymoon it was . . . twelve years ago.

"Here you are Phyllis . . . Couldn't find you . . ." Jay the Jerk hands me a drink. Phyllis the Fool takes it. Together, we meander. I hear Bennett's contagious laughter above the roar of the sea of socialites. Damn—is my heart really quivering? All of a sudden, I feel so fragile, and I don't like feeling this way.

Now I'm numb. All the people surrounding me seem meshed—interwoven bodies serving as a barrier to separate Bennett and me—or shall I say—making our separation all the more real. I should be grateful to them all. No—I want to get the hell out of here! The big getaway will probably take more skill than I can muster. But I'm drowning in this ocean—this empty room that is so terribly crowded—this beautiful room that is so ugly.

How funny! Being with Bennett at any sort of bash—he would always have to drag me away. Well, I'm going home now, Bennett. Oh, my God! I'm blocked in by a dozen bodies and he's heading this way. Let me out! It's too late. "Hello, Bennett . . . May I meet your friend?" This sudden boldness coming from me is surprising.

The game of avoidance is over. "Phyllis, this is John."

Martha Groseclose

A Lament to Liz Ray

HAPPY BIRTHDAY AMERICAN!
your candles blister the fingers that
SCREWED the tea pot's lid too tight
igniting the country with red, white, and blue.

we watched nervously as your stars
crowned the urinated hair of the
Asheville Queen—shattering lives
singeing our dreams.

headlines burned radios blurred
bitter sleeping pills soothe all pain
suicidal sugarplums dance in Congressional heads
a whore's price for a score.

melting candles stick to bleeding skin
until an ass' tear extinguishes hell

Monta Maki

Skiing

Evergreen needles
slap my face like wet fingers
raking numb skin
Snowflakes commit suicide against my body
icy kamikazes
stinging cheeks and eyes
Packed snow whispers hoarsely beneath my feet
revealing secrets
to
all
who
listen
Muscles taught, I am suspended
immobile
As the mountain hurles obstacles into my path
The curves of the trail hide her weapons
Until the last
instant
A cruel and clever opponent.

And yet,
there is no fear
no shade of grey
no indecision
in this contest

No time for anything but the mountain
and being me.

Nancy Dooly

Tia Maria

like a sip of coffee liquer
and the theme to "Un Homme et Une Femme"
the smooth background music
that led our late-night dancing
the memory slides over my mind
and rests awhile
burning my tongue with alcoholic sugar
before i let it drift down
and take another sip of memory.

M'Lou Greene

Did I Have a Point?

I
said
what I meant to say—
A
critical analyst
can take a
Gun
and
Shoot
my written words
full of
Holes—
And
when the final analysis
is finished
all that's
left is
Holes
and

what I wasn't
trying
to say—

Linda Jennings

Nostalgia—
sweeping away the present,
drowning my future dreams,
energizing my soul—nourishing my needs,
A perfume painting the past
with colors more bright than before,
with a texture more tantalizing—
The scent can never escape me:
The chains will never be loosened.

Martha Groseclose

Revised Key

Red, white, and blue MacDonald's
flag-tipped hamburgers
lettuce, onion
and a
patriotic pickle
playing "God Bless America"
lying on a side.
All on a sesame-seed bun
and 50 stars-and-stripes.
Look—see the balloons?
And there's
Yankee Doodle
with a can of instant
patriotism-inducer
guaranteed to bring a lump to the throat.
over there in a dark corner
our founding fathers
crying
leaving bitter dregs.
WHAT a price tag.

Joan Oviatt

Spectators

they fly from watchful perches
soaring through the darkened complexes
amidst the wailing cries of
rescue trucks as
the fresh smell of spilling blood
evokes perverted appetites

long curved beaks tear the singed flesh
squawking they jab eyes and ribs
pressing in the crowd competing
for the dainty meat mangled
by the rain slicked roadside

intoxicated by blood
minds spill reason as
eyes dilate pupils to devour
this sickened scene

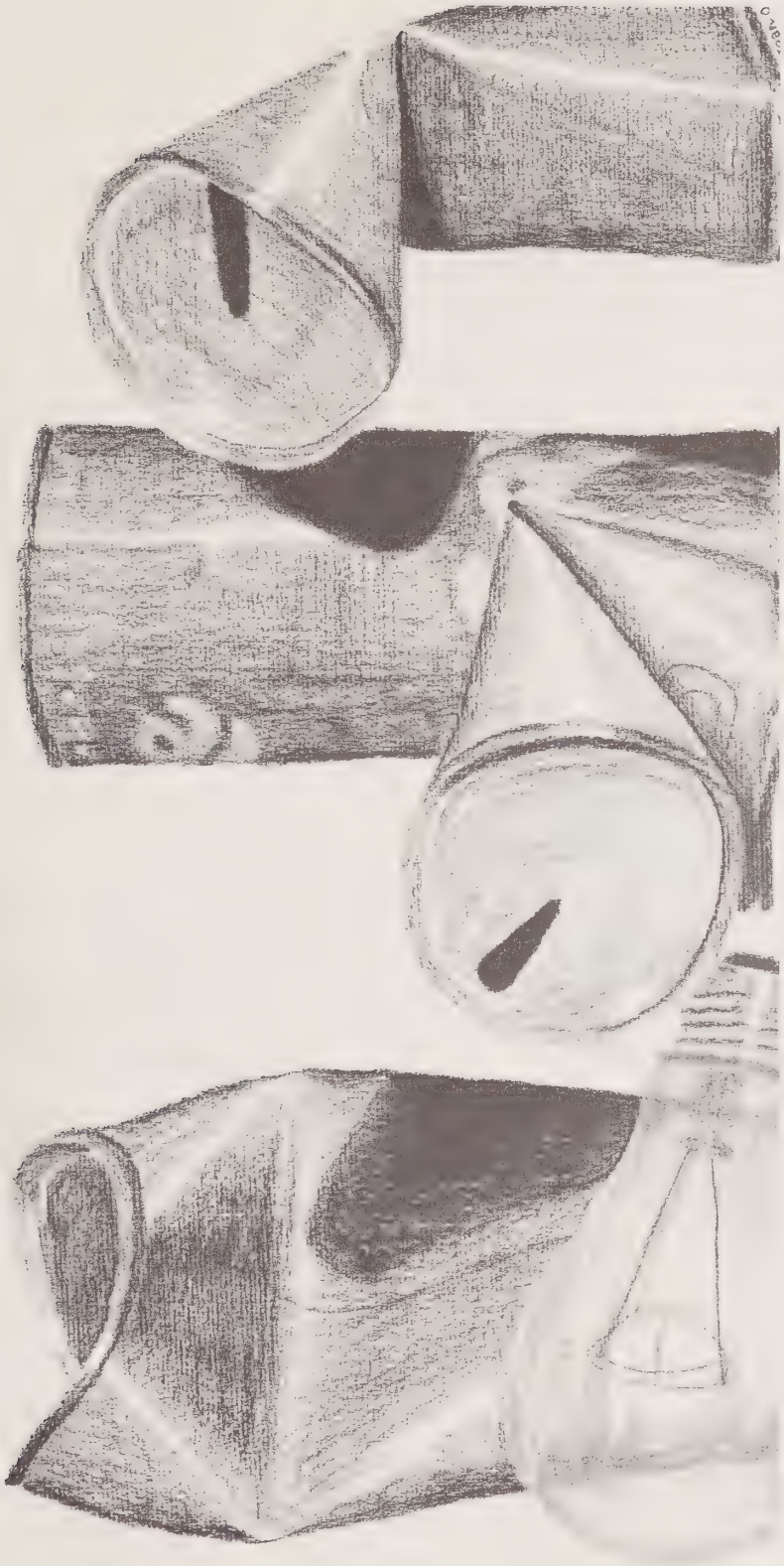
Lee O'Hare

Joanna

Quietly resting
my gold-friend and I
are sitting
embraced by warm sunbeams and
imaginings
of the ermine completeness
fill us—
a gift from our mountains.
A symphony of red
accompanies
the sunset
and we listen
together—
In silence
our friend place
is paving
completeness . . .
smoothing soul
and emotions
frayed at the edges
by a cold society's icy demands
on her women.
We are rewoven
to wholeness
by the balm of pinescent,
the refreshment of streamsound,
All are apothecaries
by God's appointment
for her
and
for me.

And now sailing
onward
in silver and crimson
Restored with
our dignity . . .
strong
in our Creed
to be all that
we
can be
to all those
who need us . . .
Healed
in our bond—
we
and respectively
me.

Suzanne Brice



Sleeping sister,
    with your always-active body
    now motionless with repose,
How fascinating to see you still—
    to hear the rhythms of your sleeping sounds—
    to watch the flickering of your long-lashed eyelids.
What joy in touching your tanned arm—
    in feeling the softness of your fingers—
    in recognizing the familiar scent of Baby Powder.
Your hair, shining in subtle rays of moonlight—
Your mouth, relaxed in your unspoken dream world.

Martha Groseclose

Morning

Morning breaks
And shatters a thousand dreams
into splinters of light
with the voice of an alarm clock.
The mind
struggles to escape the last vestiges
of peaceful slumber,
and surface
into the cold grey light
of morning and of consciousness,
While tendrils
of colourless light
seek out the last
fugitive stores of shielding darkness.

Julie Bartlett

Too Far

and one more time
i try to write
        a poem about you
but it never comes true

the feeling is a quarter of an inch
        beyond my pen
beyond words
just a little bit out of reach

M'Lou Greene

Iced Fantasies

Walking on a sheet of ice—three inches thick
    freezing lake beneath
I regressed fifteen years today
Reliving childhood fantasies—
        defying death, dying, conquering, flying
In a world all my very own
With no voices, faces, fears
But I was master all
            of me
        and my world.
I controlled the plot.
I the author.
I the star, my dreams the set.
My life unapproachable
Set apart behind the curtain of
            my insanity
        which none could enter.
I invisible
        floating in my concealment
Laughing, crying, killing and being killed
        as I'd emerge triumphant.
Never born but yet alive.
Swimming in the channels of my imaginations,
Drowning but still swimming.
'Hey you out there, get off that lake!"
The voice crashes through my barricades
Wakes me from my dreams
As I call shivering back into
Your iced reality.

Lee O'Hare

I'll hang my feet
over your bow
into the delightful blue ocean

My toes will be caressed
by the water
and my skin pulled tight by the salt air

I'll let my hair grow
long and blond
and my skin will darken with the days

My eyes will hold
foreign lands
where few men dare to plunder

I'll hold on tight
to your sail
and stay with you through the journey

Aphrodite will lead Poseidon
while Athena
is left at the harbor

Polly Smith

We work
all our lives
to get things
to hang around our necks like millstones
And all the while
we think it's the nicest thing
and work
to make it bigger
until
suddenly at last
we realize
that it's dragged us down
and we're dying
without ever having lived.

Julie Bartlett

a shadow of myself—
drifting only where shadows fall;
wanting to get back on the shelf;
gazing at the sun from afar . . .
a pastel me—
ashamed of my lack of luster;
frightened by the radiance all around;
unsure of the artist's intent.

Martha Groseclose

I really didn't need you to confuse me right now.
I don't need this.
I'm too busy.
My mind is occupied, I'm learning my lines
For the part I'll play,
Someday.
Now you've got my cues crossed up and I don't know
What comes next.
I really didn't need your garbled chatter that
Boggles my mind.
I'm too busy managing my props for you to come and
Kick them out from under me.
But no, you had to come.
Come say hello with laughing eyes,
Just before the curtain rises.

Dianne Hood

Dylan—Oh Dylan

you were a prophet
a ray of hope

you led the march through the 60's
carrying a progressive banner
. . . a banner which read
that we need not fight
over values we don't understand
but rather turn inward and reinterpret
our own ideals

your songs poured out like sweat
from the searchers' soul
and
your dreams were those of an
egalitarian

Dylan—Oh Dylan

I read today you have
just built a mansion
on Malibu Beach . . .
"The estate features
a forty thousand dollar swimming pool
and a sixty thousand dollar copper onion dome."

You—the idol of my generation
typifying the outcome of a lost
dream

. . . a dream which is vaguely remembered
from time to time
between
the long, sweet sips of your Bloody Mary
while you, my lost prophet
lie floating inertly upon a directionless raft

bounded by the concrete walls
of your swimming pool

Polly Smith

Stackings

Day on the river over,
Canoe beached, camp pitched,
Beef stew and peaches out of cans
Consumed (peach syrup later
Laced with bourbon whiskey
To make an evening's end),

We smoke and talk and spread
Wool blankets by a bonfire.
An airplane's pulsing hum above
Descends and jars our harmony
(Cost accountants Cleveland-bound—
Martinis, steak, and Cherries Jubilee).
A camp companion calls attention to a
Satellite, moving against the
West-declining heavens.
Still farther out the moon rises,
Raped lately of necessity, and
Farther still beyond a planet glows
Its messages to new gnostics.

Only looking farthest to chaste stars,
Unsteady light from talismen remote,
Is harmony restored. Soon we
Wink in syncopation with their gleam
Uncertain and drift into sleep
And sleep.

John Higby

Forsooth

Silently it glides.
Jaws agape
revealing a chasm of
Black on White.

White, smooth-toothed
margin
to sink in and devour me.

Blue-grey skin;
Leather-look volume.
Deceiving . . .
Inviting . . .
Hypnotizing . . .
Shakespeare can sneak up on you.

Moira Quinn

Why did he come tonight? I don't think I can go on.

Standing in my backstage corner, I feel chained to the floor. The murmer of the audience is restless but reassuring. Here I stand. It's too early to go on stage, but it's too late to go back down to the dressing room. Only moments ago I was sitting in front of the mirror, happy to be out of the way.

The stage manager had breezed by with his usual "five minutes, please, ladies and gentlemen." My fingers groped for the tiny cross around my neck. I felt the pounding heart beats. I heard the pounding heart beats. The chocolate bar that I had just nibbled left a nauseating sweetness in my mouth that toothpaste wouldn't remedy. As I smelled the ever-present hairspray, I automatically reached for my hair. The stickiness assured me that every hair was in place. How surprised he'll be to see it so short.

With shaky hands I retied the sash of my dress. How he loved lavender on me—or so he said. Then came the daily decision of which earrings to wear. The clasp was broken on my favorite pair, the amethysts, a gift from Grandmother on my last birthday. The pearls would have to do for both costumes tonight. "The deep purple shadow will be effective on the eyes." I recalled those words from my director as I carefully applied it. The mirror proved him right. One last touch of lipstick and the time had come to leave this comfortable confusion.

Heading for the door, I tripped over someone's sandal—probably my own. No one noticed. Climbing the stairs for the eighty-eighth time, I whispered the crucial speech of the third act. Its power was always rejuvenating, and I again experienced that rare moment of joy which he and I shared not long ago. His beautiful hands had cupped my face while his eyes met mine with a penetrating warmth.

Why did he come tonight? I don't think I can go on.

Yet, here I stand. The orchestra's overture is ending. The lights are coming down. The rumbling from the house turns into applause, magically pulling me out of my corner. Clutching my cross, I thank God for that familiar cue and for that special person on the front row.

Martha Groseclose

right beside the stream
    far enough from the road so
the cars couldn't see us
    but we could see them
there was a little rocky beach
big enough for a picnic blanket
with cheese, crackers and a bottle of Dr. Pepper
red yellow green leaves
blue sky reflected in the water
that was so cold our feet were numb
    after wading across to the big rock
taking pictures of an autumn afternoon
remembering a tiny white flower
    all alone on the mountaintop

M'Lou Greene

Memento Cheese

Your taunting
teasing
nibbles
translate into
book-length flights of fancy
or half hours on the floor.
I find myself repeating
Swiss cheese never had it so good
so good
or so often.

Jack Dillard

I gave my soul to you
throwing up from my toes
my inner being
laying it all at your feet

Pulling at my hair, I
struggled to express to you
through my true inner feelings

Laying myself out . . .
exposed to your strength
exposed to your intellect
exposed to your objectivity

giving until nothing was left to sustain me

from your French fantasy land
comes a letter
cool and polite
it brushed over my emotions
like a steel rake—
leaving me bloody and numb

reiterating your "Hey Beautiful"
bringing back lustful nights
of soft warm bodies intertwined
in a harmony of souls

"Hey Beautiful"

Now taking on a new meaning
. . .gaining a new realization
that I gave you my soul but was received purely in body

You never even knew
I was beautiful

Polly Smith

Truth

Hide it away
deep inside the feather igloo
of your pillow
Or crumple it
into a paper-faceted ball.

Tear it to pieces that fall
snowflake quitely
from your wet palm.
Burn it
letting the smoke sear your brain.

One must never put down
truths
legibly,
clearly,
On skin white paper
like splashes of blood.
Bury it deep
in your mind's soil

lest you be hidded, crumpled, torn, burnt

destroyed,
By your own lies.

Nancy Dooly

Us

Sharing my energies
With your kind face
Is like giving
Just a bit of myself
Back to me.
You are the reflection
Of my outer "innergies"

Sharing my energies
With your kind face
Is like living
Just a bit more innocently
Than is me.
You are my child
And the mother that is us.

Betsy Hardy

Take the torch off the wall,
Feel it dry-slippery in your hand
From the slow-growing coat of mould
That covers it.
Descend the stone steps,
Feel them wet-slippery beneath
Slipping slippered feet that
Grope with tight toes to find
Their way down.
Lean too far forward,
Reach for the bannister,
Feel it that never was
Vanish before your hand.
Darkness that goes on forever
Ever forward before you,
Drawing, like a magnet,
Until

Empty, unthinking fascination
Sets in.
Like the eternal darkness
Of a snake's eye holds
A rabbit in its grasp.
So this will hold you.
You will descend and descend
Until you won't want to come up.
It will fill you, and you will thirst
For it. The door through which you
Came will never be far enough away
to give you peace.
Then, even the fading torch will
be cast away into the abyss before you,
Removing the last obstruction
In the insatiable hunger of the
Damned for
Damnation.

Dianne Hood

Conan

i remember the barbarian
    from when our paths crossed years ago
i wasn't just another comely wench
whose flesh alone appealed to the mighty savage
the monstrous beast proved human
despite his unkempt, wild dark hair
    and glistening eye
oh, yes, he was powerful
    and ready for battle at a moment's notice
but he could be tamed
he fell in love
like a dog he learned to jump at my call
at times he desired no more than the touch of my hand
    to please him
when he felt down
    one kiss would usually lift his spirits
still he was a wanderer
and city life was no good for him
he was most at home in the unclaimed territories
where he could raise his head
    and spit at the world
where he could conquer once again
and prove himself master of all
so he left
off into the western lands again
where few men stand taller than the king

M'Lou Greene

No Time Left For Weeping

little girl
        lost somewhere
inside of me;
            she
laughs
        and cries
                and
often sighs
        at the cage
she's
    been
        placed
            in.

Patricia C. Marks

John

we existed as two birds—
birds of different origins
flying through a transitory summer

I viewed you as a rare specimen
. . . unknown to my familiar region

having a strange urge to study you—
a bizarre notion to explore the intricacies
of your mind

I imagined an objective venture
no strings . . .
no emotions . . .

I never quite got you under the microscope
for you were too beautiful moving in mid-air
— a motion that can only be shared
when every effort is made to
understand your flight
pattern

and now we part
after sharing a
space in time which
engulfed us in loves
temporary splendor

I leave baffled by your
quick
critical tongue
and
weakened
due to drain of love

but I leave flying . . .
into a new tomorrow
seen through a fresh
perspective of love

Polly Smith

today
when nothing is going right
today
when my problems look so huge
when i see my hopes crushed
when i see my dreams shattered
when so many walls
fall in
around me
today
when nothing is going right
i find you
as beautiful and strong as ever
and as kind
and you remind me

today
when nothing was going right
there was you
and tomorrow.

Kathy Fesperman

She is a tiny whirlwind of energy and endless encouragement. The ageless crinkles around her eyes deepend with the smile that she saves for the most important person in the world: you. Burnished hair, now growing light with imperceptible grey, seems to dance in time to the music of her laughter as she dramatizes the latest adventure stories about our cat who "forces" her to pet him and the plants that will refuse to grow without a personal "Good Morning." Instinctively, her hand moves to comfort my cheek in a gesture that I have come to recognize as a not-so-clever ruse to check my temperature during an attack of mothering. Somehow, the ruse always works and her warm touch leaves the scent of fresh earth and green that lingers from someone's infirm violets she is currently nursing. She is my mother.

Moira Quinn

Lament

Wesley died tonight.
It rained hard
when the quiet White Witch
Fog
escorted him off
the straight, two-laned road
on which he drove.

All twenty and one years
of him—
now treasured, aching memories
for those who loveknew him . . .

Wesley died tonight.
Heartsick strangers' howling souls
talk of fairness . . . or is it God?
Then they admonish posterity
with sponge-eyed fears
of
Future Foggy Nights

All twenty and one years
of him . . .
scattered novelty memories
now prestigious
for those who say they
knew him
or
"saw him just before . . ."

Wesley died
tonight
Fair or not . . .
God or not . . .
I miss his life.

Suzanne Brice

The First Rehearsal

I shall always remember
that first careful moment of
creasing back the front cover
and neatly
signing my name,
with all the assuredness
of a child biting into
its first lemon wedge.

Libby McNeill

like sand
I held you in my hand.
escaped from the hourglass,
you were the precious time of many colors
sparkling in my sun.
I tried to hold you in my hand,
but when the wind blew (as it always will),
there was no holding on.
somehow, November winds
have always blown coldest to me;
and now, you've chilled October too.
How can I love bright autumn
when all it is to me
is goodbyes?

Linda Johnson

A Poem

sometimes a poem
is not the product
of mighty springs
of inspiration
welling up within
the abstract
imaginations of
genius poets
sometimes there simply
are no thoughts
bottled up within
threatening to
explode
if not permitted
release
from the intolerable
pressure within
the poet's mind
sometimes a poem
is nothing more
than the vain creation
of an idle mind
with nothing better to do
but write nonsense
as this

Lee O'Hare

Julie Bartlett is a sophomore at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Wahroonga NSW Australia.

Suzanne Brice is a junior at Queens, from Spartanburg, S. C.

Clif Camp is a contributor from Atlanta, Georgia.

Jack Dillard is a contributor from Boone, N. C.

Nancy Dooly is a senior at Queens, from Waynesville, N. C.

Ted Duncan is an alumnus of Queens, from Charlotte.

Kathy Fesperman is a freshman at Queens and a member of SIGNET staff, from Asheville, N. C.

M'Lou Greene is a senior at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Ocala, Florida

Martha Groseclose is a senior at Queens and a member of SIGNET staff, from Eden, N. C.

Betsy Hardy is a senior at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, From Charlotte.

John Higby is a contributor from Boone, N. C.

Dianne Hood is a freshman at Queens, from Charlotte.

Linda Jennings is a sophomore at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Winston-Salem, N. C.

Linda Johnson is a contributor from Raleigh, N. C.

Monta Maki is a junior at Queens and a member of SIGNET staff, from Hickory, N. C.

Patricia C. Marks is a freshman at Queens and a member of SIGNET staff, from Charlotte.

Joan Oviatt is a senior at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Charlotte.

Moira Quinn is a senior at Queens, from Charlotte.

Polly Smith is a sophomore at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Tallahassee, Florida.

Melanie Snow is a senior at Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Matthews, N. C.

Marion Cook is a senior at Queens, from Knoxville, Tennessee.

Colleen Turnage is an alumna of Queens and a member of Sigma Upsilon, from Charlotte.

Queens College
SIGNET Staff Spring 1977

M'Lou Greene—Editor
Julie Bartlett
Kathy Fesperman
Martha Groseclose
Linda Jennings
Monta Maki
Lee O'Hare
Joan Oviatt
Polly Smith
Margaret Whittier